

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph at page 19, lines 10-26, to read as follows:

It may be desirable to provide gradual transitions between areas of nominal and less-than-nominal thickness. For example, FIG. 12A shows a close-up, in cross-section, of a portion of the wall section 580 of the rough tubular form 550 shown in FIG. 11B. As depicted in FIG. 12A, the inner surface 552 has borders 586 that are well-defined between the thinner areas 574 of thickness ~~[[60]]~~ 560 and the thicker areas 576 of thickness 556. In another embodiment depicted in FIG. 12B, the inner surface 552 has a more gradual transition region 588 between the thinner areas 574 and the thicker areas 576. Thus, the inner surface 552 of the rough tubular form 550, and the resulting finished stent, is free of sharp drop-offs between adjacent areas, and instead has gradual ramping transition regions 588 that provide a smoother transition between adjacent areas. The gradual transition regions are not required to be formed as straight ramps, but may be formed in a variety of simple and/or complex geometrical shapes, depending on the particular application. Such transition regions are useful in that they provide increased frictional contact between the inner surface of the stent and a balloon without using abrupt contours or sharp edges that may damage the balloon when the stent is crimped onto the balloon, or when the balloon is inflated to deliver the stent to a vessel lumen.